



MA Association of
Community Health Workers



An Act relative to health equity and community health workers

Bill Number: H.359 / S.251	Lead Sponsors: Rep. Decker & Sen. R. Kennedy
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What does this legislation do?

- Requires MassHealth, the Group Insurance Commission (GIC) and private insurance to cover Community Health Worker (CHW) services.
- Establishes a taskforce to study the current CHW workforce and make recommendations to strengthen and support the workforce.
- Adds navigation and connection to resources for health needs, including behavioral health, to CHW core competencies.

Why is this legislation needed?

- CHW services are not specifically covered or reimbursed by MassHealth, the GIC, or private insurance. Their positions are often funded by grants and other time-limited funding streams.
- There are opportunities to better utilize and support the CHW workforce in a way that also helps address broader health care workforce shortages, especially for underserved populations.

Who are Community Health Workers?

- CHWs are front-line public health professionals who use their unique understanding of the experience, language and/or culture of their communities to act as a bridge between health and social services systems and the populations served. CHWs help advance health equity.
- CHWs are crucial members of health care teams and community health efforts. CHWs serve various roles, such as outreach and referral specialists, community health educators, health coaches, patient navigators, care coordinators and peer advocates in both health care and community-based settings.
- CHWs help people connect to services and programs that help with health-related social needs, such as food and housing assistance. During and after the public health emergency, CHWs played a crucial role in increasing vaccine uptake, providing in-home wraparound services and promoting telehealth digital literacy.

For more information, please contact Suzanne Curry at Health Care For All: scurry@hcfama.org.